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SCIENCE

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BOTANICAL TEACHING¹

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I. ON THE PREPARATION OF BOTANICAL TEACHERS

SOME months ago a suggestion was made that at this dinner we should ask ourselves the question: Why is it that with the enormous classes we are having in botany there is a marked dearth of properly trained men who can serve as instructors in colleges and universities?

In order to be sure that I was right in regard to such a dearth I wrote to something like a dozen of the professors of botany in prominent institutions in the country, making the inquiry whether they had noticed the same thing, and uniformly the answer was that there seems to be a shortage in the supply of material for instructors (in the college sense) and young men for other minor positions.

I think there is no lack of men who are ready to be professors of botany. I am very certain that there is no trouble here, but when a professor who knows what he wants asks for a man who can take up this work or that work as an instructor, the situation is quite different.

What becomes of the great number of students who are in our classes? The professor of botany in the University of Minnesota tells me that he has over 500 students in his beginning classes. In Nebraska we have about 350, and elsewhere I find essentially the same thing. Enormous classes are pursuing general botany, and

¹ From the stenographic report of oral addresses delivered at the conference on botanical teaching at the dinner for botanists, Minneapolis, December 29, 1910.